

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 AF-06

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R 021142Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5489

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO, PINS

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: LISBON 7724 (DTG 311811Z DEC 75)

SUMMARY: IN NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS, PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES
ENDORSED GOVERNMENT AUSTERITY PROGRAM AND APPEALED FOR
PEACE, FRATERNITY AND TOLERANCE AMONG PORTUGUESE.
DEMONSTRATION SAME DAY AGAINST CONTINUED IMPRISONMENT
OF NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT DETAINEES LEFT THREE DEAD AND
NUMEROUS WOUNDED. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRESIDENTIAL NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS: IN TRADITIONAL NEW

YEAR'S ADDRESS OVER NATIONWIDE TELEVISION, PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES GAVE PRIORITY TO NEED TO RESOLVE PORTUGUESE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. NOTING EXHAUSTION OF PORTUGUESE FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES, COSTA GOMES EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR ACHIEVING NEW ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL EQUILIBRIUM. HE ADMITTED THAT IN THE PAST COURAGE TO ENFORCE AUSTERITY MEASURES CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THE ECONOMIC CRISIS HAD BEEN LACKING. ENDORSING AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT'S AUSTERITY PROGRAM, HE STRESSED THAT EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE ECONOMY WOULD HAVE TO BEGIN IN PORTUGAL. HE CRITICIZED "EXCESSES" WHICH HAVE IN PAST CHARACTERIZED WORKER-MANAGEMENT/LANDLORD RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SAME EXCESSES WOULD NOT BE REPEATED IN 1976. IN COMMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, COSTA GOMES EXPRESSED PORTUGAL'S CONTINUING HOPE FOR WORLD PEACE, PRAISED THE HELSINKI ACCORDS AS A STEP IN THIS DIRECTION, RENEWED PORTUGUESE COMMITMENTS TO TREATY OBLIGATIONS, AND EXPRESSED DETERMINATION OF PORTUGUESE DIPLOMACY TO PLAY ROLE IN IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS. COSTA GOMES CONCLUDED SPEECH WITH CALL FOR PEACE, FRATERNITY, AND TOLERANCE AMONG PORTUGUESE.

2. ON DEC 30, PRESIDENCY SPOKESMAN DENIED AS MERE SPECULATION "O DIA" REPORT OF IMMINENT PRESIDENTIAL RESIGNATION. SPOKESMAN SAID THAT COSTA GOMES WORKS MORNING AND NIGHT WITH NO DIMINUTION IN HIS FACULTIES.

3. THREE KILLED IN DEMONSTRATION: OPORTO DEMONSTRATION BY 2,000 PEOPLE PROTESTING CONTINUED IMPRISONMENT OF MILITARY ARRESTED FOLLOWING NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT RESULTED IN THREE DEATHS AND NUMEROUS WOUNDED JAN 1. DEMONSTRATION WAS ORGANIZED BY COMMUNIST FRONT GROUPS MOVEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL WORKERS (MUTI) AND ANTI-FASCIST COMMISSION OF SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTIONARY PRISONERS (COMMISSAO ANTIFASCISTA DE APOIO AOS REVOLUCIONARIOS PRESOS -- CAARP). IT TOOK PLACE AT CUSTOIAS PRISON, WHERE MAJORITY OF NOV 25 DETAINEES ARE BEING HELD, AND INCLUDED NUMEROUS MEMBERS OF PRISONERS' FAMILIES. DEATHS OCCURRED WHEN, REPORTEDLY RESPONDING TO PISTOL SHOTS FROM CROWD, NATIONAL GUARDSMEN PROTECTING INSTALLATION FIRED ON DEMONSTRATORS WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. SECOND JAN 1 DEMONSTRATION CALLED BY CAARP AT CAXIAS PRISON, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON OUTSKIRTS OF LISBON, WAS ALSO MARKED BY VIOLENCE. AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE OF DEMONSTRATORS TOWARD COMMANDO UNIT GUARDING PRISON LED TROOPS TO FIRE WARNING SHOTS TO DISPERSE CROWD. NO INJURIES WERE REPORTED.

4. COMMENT: COSTA GOMES ADDRESS IS STRONGEST ENDORSEMENT YET BY PRESIDENT FOR AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT'S AUSTERITY PROGRAM. CUSTOIAS DEMONSTRATION IS LARGEST, AND FIRST VIOLENT, ANTI-

GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY SINCE NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT. LEFT CAN BE
EXPECTED TO USE KILLINGS AS PRETEXT FOR RENEWED CAMPAIGN
TO PORTRAY NATIONAL GUARD AND GOP AS REACTIONARIES. LEFT'S
REDUCED CONTROL OF PRESS, HOWEVER, WILL MAKE SUCH A
CAMPAIGN FAR LESS EFFECTIVE THAN IN PAST.
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